INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW

MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

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Impact of COVID-19 on Rural Areas of Hamirpur District of Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

We live in a digital world and it has given us the key to knowledge. Now we all know where CORONA originated, China. The COVID-19 pandemic is considered as the most crucial global health calamity of the century and the greatest challenge that the humankind faced since the 2nd World War. Coronaviruses is a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). However, learning has not stopped but is now fully taking place online as schools and universities provide remote schooling. Same decision occupied by India in all states of including Himachal Pradesh. With this paper attempts to gain a better understanding of how impact of COVID-19 on rural areas of Hamirpur District of Himachal Pradesh. In this paper we found and estimates for a few selected villages of Himachal Pradesh consistently indicate that, on average, students will suffer a learning loss.

 Keywords: *Coronaviruses, Consistently, Respiratory.*

I. INTRODUCTION

We live in a digital world and it has given us the key to knowledge. Now we all know where CORONA originated, CHINA (no points for getting it right though). Let us see what we don't, but should know about COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic is considered as the most crucial global health calamity of the century and the greatest challenge that the humankind faced since the 2nd World War. It has so many common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death also. According to the report of the World Health Organization (WHO as of April 18, 2020), the current outbreak of COVID-19, has affected over 2164111 people and killed more than 146,198

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people in more than 200 countries throughout the world. Till now there is no report of any clinically approved antiviral drugs or vaccines that are effective against COVID-19. It has rapidly spread around the world, posing enormous health, economic, environmental and social challenges to the entire human population. The coronavirus outbreak is severely disrupting the global economy. Almost all the nations are struggling to slow down the transmission of the disease by testing & treating patients, quarantining suspected persons through contact tracing, restricting large gatherings, maintaining complete or partial lock down etc.

(B) Caused and Symptoms of Covid-19

The recent outbreak began in Wuhan, a city in the Hubei province of China. Reports of the first COVID-19 cases started in December 2019. Corona viruses are common in certain species of animals, such as cattle and camels. Although the transmission of corona viruses from animals to humans is rare, this new strain likely came from bats, though one study suggests pangolins may be the origin,   However it remains unclear exactly how the virus first spread to humans. Some reports trace the earliest cases back to a seafood and animal market in Wuhan. It may have been from here that SARS-CoV-2 started to spread to humans. People may be sick with the virus for 1 to 14 days before developing symptoms. The most common symptoms of corona virus disease are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. More rarely, the disease can be serious and even fatal. Older people, and people with other medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), may be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill.[3]

(C) Literature Review

The world is fighting the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19), declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization in January 2020, leading to questions regarding where the world will be in the next few months, a year or maybe even a decade from now, specifically regarding what the future holds for each stakeholder of society. **Shohini Roy, (2020**), The coronavirus spread rapidly throughout the world. The pandemic created severe economic impact in different sectors of the economy negatively affecting global trade, interest rates, financial market liquidity and creating demandand supply shocks. It is uncertain when the economies around the world will recover from the global pandemic or to conduct additional research on the social, economic and financial effect of the coronavirus pandemic.

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[3] Worldometers.info. 2021. *COVID Live Update: 174,376,256 Cases and 3,751,988 Deaths from the Coronavirus - Worldometer.* [online] Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> [Accessed 8 June 2021].

Peterson Ozili (2020) analyzed the coronavirus outbreak and the spillover to the global economy which triggered the global recession in 2020. Policy makers in many countries were under pressure to respond to the coronavirus outbreak. As a result, many governments made fast policy decisions that had far-reaching positive and negative effects on their respective economy – many countries plunged into a recession. Social distancing policies and lockdown restrictions were imposed in many countries, and there have been arguments that such social policies can trigger a recession. Our findings in section 5 showed that a 30-day social distancing policy or lockdown restriction hurts the economy through a reduction in the level of general economic activities and through its negative effect on stock prices. There were criticisms that the policies were too fast, premature or insufficient, and that the policies contradicted one another in some areas, for instance, the accommodative monetary policy encouraged economic agents to engage in economic activities while the lockdowns and social-distancing (stay-at-home) policy prevented economic activities from taking place. Future studies on spillovers could be extended to two directions. First, future studies can examine the impact on government policy on the informal economy. Second, it would be important to explore how banks and financial institutions react to economic policy developments during the coronavirus crisis in business and living our livelihood to the minimum,[4] According to Jeremy Phillipson, (2004) rapid assessment of current and likely future impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on rural economies given their socio-economic characteristics. Drawing principally on current evidence for the UK, as well as lessons from the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak and the 2007/8 financial crises, it outlines the likely key demand and supply effects, paying attention to the situation for agriculture as well as discussing the implications for rural communities. A distinction is made between the effects on businesses offering goods and services for out-of-home as opposed to in-home consumption. Gendered dimensions are also noted as likely business and household strategies for coping and adaptation. The paper concludes with a brief mapping of a research agenda for studying the longer-term effects of COVID-19 on rural economies. Covid-19 has posed an unprecedented challenge for India. Given the large size of the population, the precarious situation of the economy, especially of the financial sector in the pre-Covid-19 period, and the economy's dependence on informal labour, lockdowns and other social distancing measures are turning out to be hugely disruptive. The central and state governments have recognized the challenge and have responded but this response should be just the beginning. The event l damage to the economy is likely to be

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[4] The Economic Times. 2021. *Business News Today: Read Latest Business news, India Business News Live, Share Market & Economy News | The Economic Times*. [online] Available at: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/.> [Accessed 8 June 2021].

significantly worse than the current estimates. At the same time they must ensure that the responses remain enshrined in a rules-based framework and limit the exercise of discretion in order to avoid long-term damage to the economy. Shashi,2020 found in a study that midst of the current global pandemic, India's national lockdown and measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 have been effective thus far, albeit at a cost, particularly among of rural India and specially rural state Himachal Pradesh. In order to gain a better understanding of the immediate impacts the pandemic and lockdown, a phone survey was conducted among about 300 below-the-poverty-line villagers of self-help groups in backward panchyat of Mehal of district Hamirpur HP to assess the situation of their households in different parameters. The great majority of households reported extreme declines in income and employment. Distribution of free rice rations seems to be working effectively, but most respondents did not report receiving monetary transfers from the government. Additionally, the study demonstrates how universities may engage their students in tackling this contemporary social issue, by offering them opportunities to translate their learned classroom knowledge to practical, real-world settings.

(D) Objectives

Keeping in view presents paper has been objective framed

- To study the current status of COVID-19 in India as well as Himachal Pradesh (till 2020)
- To find out awareness level of respondents about COVID-19.

(E) Methodology

The dilemma about COVID -19 is same in India as well as its respective state i.e. Himachal Pradesh. In both Himachal Pradesh and India COVID -19 pandemic is increasing day by day. By observing these worst situations about the same, we have decided to choose some selected villages of district Hamirpur of Himachal Pradesh. In a Himachal Pradesh, Block Bhoranj of district Hamirpur has the highest cases in the state with this background the present study entitled "Impact of COVID-19 on rural areas of Hamirpur District of Himachal Pradesh" So for this purpose primary data had collected with the help of a questionnaire specially designed to reach study objectives. Secondary data have been collected from the various documents, reports, media sources and internet sources etc. This report based on descriptive, exploratory analysis.

II. CURRENT STATUS OF COVID-19

Table-1 Status of COVID-19 in India till 2020

S. No	Cases	Number
1	Confirmed Cases	1639406
2	Active	544430
3	Recovered	1058891
4	Deceased	36085

Sources: https://covidindia.org/

Table 1 shows that total 1639406 confirmed cases in India today, 544430 active cases, 1058891 cases recovered and 36085 cases deceased in India Today. Though it has created many challenges, various opportunities are also evolved. The Indian Govt. and different stakeholders of education have explored the possibility of Open and Distance learning (ODL) by adopting different digital technologies to cope up with the present crisis of COVID-19. India is not fully equipped to make education reach all corners of the nation via digital platforms.

Table-2

Status of COVID-19 in Himachal Pradesh till 2020

S. No	Cases	Number
1	Confirmed Cases	2506
2	Active	1105
3	Recovered	1387
4	Deceased	14

Sources: https://covidindia.org/himachal-pradesh/

Table-3 District wise status of COVID-19 in Himachal Pradesh till 2020

S.N	Districts	Confirmed Cases	Active	Recovered	Deceased
1	Bilaspur	87	36	51	0
2	Chamba	103	32	70	1

3	Hamirpur	304	22	279	3
4	Kangra	443	127	313	3
5	Kinnaur	44	17	27	0
6	Kullu	33	16	17	0
7	Lahaul and Spiti	4	0	4	0
8	Mandi	133	87	43	3
9	Shimla	159	94	62	3
10	Sirmaur	305	249	55	1
11	Solan	593	416	177	0
12	Una	195	59	136	0

Sources: https://covidindia.org/himachal-pradesh/

(A) Results and Discussion

This section presents analysis of the empirical data collected from 171 respondents hailing from 11 villages of Bhoranj tehsil of Hamirpur districts of Himachal Pradesh upto dec 2020. As described in methodology, firstly, the empirical data about socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed by using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

(B) Demographic characteristics of respondents

The understanding of Demographic characteristics of the subjects under study helps to understand the phenomenon under study in a more comprehensive way. Following tables summarize Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Gender -wise distribution of the respondents

The table 1 depicts gender-wise distribution of the sampled respondents.

Table No. 1

Distribution of respondents by their Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	51	29.8	29.8
Male	120	70.2	100.0
Total	**171**	**100.0**	

Table 1 represent that out of the 171 respondents that completed the survey, 70.2 percent were males and remaining 29.8 percent were females. This shows that gender-wise respondents were unevenly distributed with males significantly outnumbering females. This distribution does not coincide with the overall gender distribution of population of the state which is 49.27 females and 50.72 males as per Census of India 2011. This may be due to the fact that all our respondents belong to rural area where male dominates female while dealing with external matters.

Family Type distribution of the respondents

The following table 2 describes the Family Type distribution of the sampled respondents.

Table No. 2: Family Type Distribution of respondents

Family Type	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Nuclear	121	70.8	70.8
Joint	50	29.2	100.0
Total	**171**	**100.0**	

The Table 2 shows family type profile and revealed that 70.8 percent respondents live in nuclear family and 29.2 percent live in joint families.

Category -wise distribution of the respondents

The table 3vdepicts category-wise distribution of the respondents.

Table No. 3: Distribution of respondents by their Category

Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
General	61	35.7	35.7
SC	26	15.2	50.9
ST	0.0	0.0	50.9
OBC	84	49.1	100.0
Total	**171**	**100.0**	

From the table 3 it is cleared that 49.1 percent respondents belong to OBC, 35.7 are from

Number of Family Member wise Distribution of the respondents

The table 4 depicts the respondents on the basis of number of members in the family.

Table No. 4

Distribution of respondents by Number of Family Members

No. of Family members	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	9	5.3	5.3
2	12	7.0	12.3
3	46	26.9	39.2
4	59	34.5	73.7
5	30	17.5	91.2
6	10	5.8	97.1
7	2	1.2	98.2
8	1	.6	98.8
9	2	1.2	100.0
Total	**171**	**100.0**	

On the basis of table 4, we can say that 34.5 percent respondents having 4 members in their family followed by 26.9 percent respondents having 3 members in the family. It was also found that 17.5 percent respondents having 5 members in their family.

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of family members having Government jobs.

Government jobs are very popular in Himachal Pradesh, and in Hamirpur district, the ratio of person working in government services is very high as compared to other districts. The table 9 depicts the respondents on the basis of number of members working in Government services.

Table No. 5

Distribution of respondents by Number of family members having Government jobs

Number of family members in Government jobs	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	66	38.6	38.6
1	69	40.4	78.9
2	31	18.1	97.1
3	5	2.9	100.0
Total	171	100.0	

From the table 5 it can be said that there is one government employee in the families of 40.4 percent of respondents and 18.1 percent respondents' families has two employees. It is also raveled that 38.6 percent respondents have no government employee in their families.

General information about COVID-19Main source of information about spreading of COVID-19

Table No. 6: Distribution of respondents by main source of information about spreading of COVID-19

Source of information	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
News Paper	8	4.7	4.7
Television	87	50.9	55.6
Internet	13	7.6	63.2
Friends and Family	2	1.2	64.3
CPUH Volunteers	59	34.5	98.8
Other	2	1.2	100.0
Total	171	100.0	

From the table 6, it is cleared that Television is the main source of information about spreading of COVID-19, followed by volunteers of CPUH who made calls to local villagers to create awareness about spread of COVID-19 pandemics. Internet is placed third and followed by newspaper preferred by 4.7 percent respondents. So, it can be said that one to one calling contact could be very important source of information to deliver message in the society belongs to rural area.

Distribution of the respondents' response towards the type of quarantine for outside comers

Table No. 7

Respondents' response towards type of quarantine for outside comers

Type of quarantine for outside comers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Home	50	29.2	29.2
Institutional	118	69.0	98.2
Can't Say	3	1.8	100.0
Total	**171**	**100.0**	

Table 7 reported that 69.0 respondents' want to keep outside comers in institutional quarantine and only 29.2 percent selected option of home quarantine. 1.18 percent didn't give any opinion about it.

Distribution of the respondents' awareness about duration of home quarantine

Table No. 8 : Respondents' awareness about duration of home quarantine

Duration of Home Quarantine(Days)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	4	2.3	2.3
7	11	6.4	8.8
10	3	1.8	10.5
14	153	89.5	100.0
Total	**171**	**100.0**	

Different respondents reported different duration for home quarantine, It can be seen from Table 8, that 89.5 percent respondents reported 14 days, and 6.4 percent reported 7 days as

duration of home quarantine.

Distribution of the respondents' awareness about duration of institutional quarantine

Table No.9: Respondents' awareness about duration of institutional quarantine

Duration of Institutional Quarantine	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	4	2.3	2.3
10	1	.6	2.9
12	2	1.2	4.1
14	111	64.9	69.0
28	53	31.0	100.0
Total	**171**	**100.0**	

In table no 9, we have talked about duration of institutional quarantine period, and it was found that duration of institutional quarantine is 14 days (reported by 64.9 percent respondents) while 31.0 percent respondents mentioned 28 days duration. It is important to create awareness in this direction in the society.

Distributions of respondents' response towards COVID-19 affect occupation

Table No. 10: Response towards COVID-19 affects occupation

Business effected by COVID-19	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	111	64.9	64.9
No	23	13.5	78.4
Can't Say	37	21.6	100.0
Total	**171**	**100.0**	

It is elucidated from table 10 that majority of respondents (64.9 %) agreed that COVID-19 affect the occupation while 13.5 percent not agreed with this. It was also found that about 21.6 percent respondents did not say about the effect of COVID-19 on occupation.

Table No. 11: Level of General Awareness about COVID-19

General Awareness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aware	43	25.1	25.1
Moderately Aware	108	63.2	88.3
Not Aware	20	11.7	100.0
Total	**171**	**100.0**	

From the table 11 it is clear that only 25.1 percent are highly aware about COVID-19 & and 63.2 percent are moderately aware and 11.7 percent of respondents don't not have general information about COVID-19.

Gender and general awareness about COVID-19

The gender is important because in Indian society gender specific roles are assigned to individuals. For instance, females are considered most fit for domestic roles, whereas, males for economic activities outside home and works that require more physical strength or are strenuous in nature. The given table 21 demonstrates gender-wise analysis of General Awareness about COVID-19.

Table No.12

Gender of respondents and general awareness about COVID-19

General Awareness	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Aware	13	30	43
	25.49%	25.0%	25.1%
Moderately Aware	30	78	108
	58.82%	65.0%	63.2%
Not Aware	8	12	20
	15.69%	10.0%	11.7%

Total	51	120	171
	100%	100%	100%

df= 2 $\chi2 = 1.209$ P > 0.05 NS

It is interesting to observe that across sub-categories of gender i.e. males and females; a very little difference was noticed in percentage of respondents under aware, moderately aware and not aware categories with respect to their General Awareness about COVID-19.

This variation is not significant as the difference is less than 10 percent. It reveals that male and female of rural areas of Himachal Pradesh do not differ significantly in their level of General Awareness about COVID-19. This observation is also supported by the calculated value of chi-square, $\chi^2 = 1.209$ which is less than the table value 5.991 at 0.05 percent significance level and shows that gender is not significantly associated with the General Awareness about COVID-19. Therefore, the null hypothesis i.e. there is no significant relationship between gender and General Awareness about COVID-19, is proved.

Level of awareness about precautions for prevention & control of COVID-19

Table No. 13

Awareness about precautions for prevention & control of COVID-19

Awareness about precautions for prevention and control of COVID-19	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aware	35	20.5	20.5
Moderately Aware	113	66.1	86.5
Not Aware	23	13.5	100.0
Total	171	100.0	

From the table 13, it is clear that only 20.5 percent are aware about precautions for prevention & control of COVID-19, 66.1 percent are moderately aware and 13.5 percent are not aware about precautions for prevention & control of COVID-19.

Level of Awareness about domestic measure for prevention and control of COVID-19

Table No. 14

Awareness about domestic measure for prevention and control of COVID-19

Awareness about domestic measure for prevention and control of COVID-19	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aware	50	29.2	29.2
Moderately Aware	88	51.5	51.5
Not Aware	33	19.3	19.3
Total	171	100.0	100.0

From the table 14, it is clear that only 29.2 percent are aware about domestic measure for prevention and control of COVID-19, 51.5 percent are moderately aware and 19.3 percent are not aware about domestic measure for prevention and control of COVID-19.

III. MAJOR FINDING OF THE STUDY

Here discussion is made on the major findings of this study and on its basis, suggestions are made in this field of enquiry with possible explanations.

1. The major findings pertaining to socio-economic variables are as given below:

- In this study, 70.2 percent respondents were males and remaining 29.8 percent were females; 70.8 percent respondents live in nuclear family and 29.2 percent live in joint families; 49.1 percent respondents belong to OBC 35.7 are from general category. On the basis of data analyzed, we have found that 40.4 percent respondents' families have one employee, 18.1 percent has two employees and 38.6 percent respondents have no government employee in their families; 83.0 percent respondents have no business background; there is no student in the family of 39.2 percent respondents. Further, It is also found that about 24.6 percent respondents having one student member & 28.6 percent respondents have two student members in their families.

- From the data analyzed, it is cleared that Television is the main source of information about spreading of COVID-19, followed by volunteers of CPUH who made calls to local villagers to create awareness; 22.2 percent respondents reported that there are active cases in their locality while 74.9 percent denied about any COVID-19 cases; about 57.9 rural people are awareabout the causes for spreading of COVID-19, while 42.1 percent not aware; 98.2

percent respondents want to keep in quarantine for persons coming from outside the state; 69.0 percent respondents selected institutional quarantine for outside comers.

- From the study it is clear that only 25.1 percent are highly aware about COVID-19 & and 63.2 percent are moderately aware and 11.7 percent of respondents are not aware about COVID-19; male and female of rural areas of Himachal Pradesh do not differ significantly in their level of General Awareness about COVID-19. The study also revealed that only 20.5 percent are aware, 66.1 percent are moderately aware and 13.5 percent are not aware about precautions for prevention & control of COVID-19; in case of awareness about domestic measure for prevention and control of COVID-19, 29.2 percent are aware, 51.5 percent are moderately aware and 19.3 percent are not aware.

IV. SUGGESTIONS

- The utilization Television could very helpful to create awareness among rural people. Beside television, one to one contact via phone calling also be very helpful in this direction.

- Awareness about the causes for spreading of COVID-19 is low in rural areas and needed to be increased.

- People coming from outside places should be kept in quarantine. It is better to go for institutional quarantine to control COVID-19 pandemic.

- Most of the people are not well aware about the duration of quarantine period. It is very much required to create proper awareness in this direction, specially in case of duration of institutional quarantine.

- The occupation of people is affected by pandemic and proper steps required should be taken in this direction.

V. CONCLUSION

In this report an attempt has been made to access the Impact of COVID-19 on rural areas of Hamirpur District of Himachal Pradesh. The main objectives of the researcher To study the current status of COVID-19, to study impact of COVID -19 on rural areas and on education, to find out awareness level of respondents about COVID-19. Primary data was collected from 171 respondents from the rural areas of Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh with the help of specially designed questionnaire, and it was found that it is important to create high level of awareness among rural people about COVID-19 by utilizing electronic media and adopting one to one contact approach. COVID-19 pandemic affect society, psychology of rural people, economy and education a lot and timely steps need to be taken for improvement.

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